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INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE
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TAGS: [SNAR](#) [PINS](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ML](#)

SUBJECT: TUAREGS AND ARABS CLASH OVER DRUGS AND CASH IN
NORTHERN MALI

Classified By: POLITICAL OFFICER GLENN FEDZER FOR REASONS
1.4 (B) and (D)

¶1. (C) Sources in Kidal reported to us that a two vehicle convoy carrying cocaine under the protection of Kidal-based smuggler Hama Moussa was reportedly stopped in Mauritania sometime between 13-15 August near the Mauritanian village of Arikchach (actual location and/or spelling unknown) by Berabich under the direction of Ibrahim Handa and "Lahsoune".

After removing the cocaine as a "transit tax" for passing through Berabich territory, the drivers and vehicles were allowed to continue to Kidal. Moussa and the drivers of the vehicles are ethnic Tuaregs from northeastern Mali, while Handa and Lahsoune (no further name given) are from the ethnically Arab Berabich clan of Northern Mali.

¶2. (C) The cocaine was supposedly in transit from Morocco (where it had been shipped by air from South America) to Egypt or the Sudan, where smugglers would take possession of the cocaine for onward shipment to Europe or the Gulf States.

Following the seizure, Moussa immediately began taking steps to recover the cocaine by force. Violence was averted when Moussa and Commandant Ould Bou Lamana, an ethnic Berabich and officer in the Malian DGSE (Director General for State Security), negotiated a cash settlement of 30 million Algerian Dinars (a little under 450,000 dollars) in exchange for return of the cocaine and as an advanced tax on future trips.

¶3. (C) The names of Moussa and Lamana have surfaced in other sensitive reporting, consistent with their roles in the drama described above. Commandant (Major-equivalent) Lamana has fed information to criminal and terrorist organizations in the past, and his exact role within State Security remains a mystery: a member of President Toure's staff was even overheard August 28 complaining about Lamana's involvement in a cell phone conversation with DGSE Director General Colonel Mamy Coulibaly. While the exact details of the complaint were unclear, it appeared Coulibaly was actively interceding with the Presidency to protect Lamana. The Kidal rumor mill at the source of this information inevitably loses or alters some of the facts in the retelling, but such reports are often surprisingly reliable, if not always completely accurate, and provide an intriguing if incomplete window into the drug trafficking and smuggling throughout the ungoverned regions of Northern Mali.

McCulley